

country as a general principle, but even within that context, each territory has an unique relationship with the Federal Government.

Now, some people would argue that this is odd and confusing, and maybe we should just have a one-size-fits-all for territories. The problem is that we are really treading on the relationship between what is the meaning of my being a U.S. citizen and other people from the territories being U.S. citizens and not being self-governing, and how do we resolve that dilemma. That dilemma could be resolved by a grant of statehood, but admittedly it is a steep political hill to climb. It is already a steep enough political hill to climb for those who advocate statehood for Puerto Rico, let alone trying to consider how that might work for people who come from what are admittedly small jurisdictions. My own home island of Guam has approximately 135,000 people on it.

So it remains open to question, and it remains clearly in the will of Congress and for the people of the territories to rely on the good judgment of the people of Congress, which sometimes makes us feel very vulnerable, as indeed it does the general American public. But it remains open to question, and that is why it is a very serious matter to us, because we have no specific governing relationship other than a series of commitments that may have been made historically at a given point in time.

So I want to come back to the general issue of what has been termed labor abuses in the CNMI and its relationship to Guam.

The CNMI, in 1976, was given a grant of authority to regulate immigration, was specifically exempted from the application of the minimum wage, was specifically authorized to participate in the Headnote 3A Program. This authority and this grant of authority has allowed them to grow their economy in a very dramatic way.

It is also clear that there has been an increased number of allegations regarding labor abuses, regarding the garment, so-called garment sweat shops, regarding the abuses of domestic workers for people that have been brought in as domestic workers. So we really are running the issue here of what constitutes basic American principles, are there violations of basic American principles, and the manner in which the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands is conducting its business as legitimately authorized by the U.S. Congress.

I would argue that in the CNMI, if there are problems in the CNMI, and I recognize that there are, we need to address them in the context of the enforcement of existing laws and possible changes in the existing laws, while keeping in mind the original purposes of the freedoms and the latitude that have been given to them in the CNMI.

If the original purposes of granting them this authority, local control over

immigration and exemption from the minimum wage, if those original purposes have been perverted or taken advantage of, then I certainly would support an effort to put them back on track. But at the same time, it must be made clear that it is very easy to make comparisons and say, well, what happens in one jurisdiction will happen in another.

In the meantime, while this has been occurring, remember that the CNMI has only been associated under the United States since 1976. It has been barely 20 years. In the meantime, Guam has been under U.S. sovereignty almost 100 years, and it has successfully dealt with U.S. labor laws and it has successfully dealt with their economic livelihood, even with the application of Federal minimum wage.

So I would hasten to add that anyone who wants to make these comparisons is going to make them on very shaky ground. But in the meantime, it is important to be mindful that the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas are not an evil population, they do not have a corrupt political leadership that is designed to abuse people who come to the CNMI for work. They are new Americans. Think about it. They are new Americans, barely 20-year-old Americans, who have deep traditions of their own and, as I have indicated, have a very unique historical experience.

We have to engage them as fellow citizens with whom we have an existing legal framework, the covenant of the Northern Marianas, to resolve differences. We have to clarify when we think they have violated basic American principles. But we also have to understand their circumstances. Some of the articles regarding the CNMI I think, and certainly in my experience with the CNMI, have gone beyond the reality of the CNMI and have reached certain levels of almost caricature.

□ 0945

The CNMI is not the hotbed of labor abuse as some have portrayed, but I want to point out just as clearly, it is not the conscious experiment of economic freedom that some think tanks want to believe that it is. This is not about a government that is consciously trying to deal with how to survive without a minimum wage. The argument about all of that is very unrealistic if we look exactly within the context of the CNMI.

The CNMI is the product of an historical experiment in the extension of American principles of some 20 years duration. When a small Pacific island population like the CNMI has experienced the sudden impact of change which has occurred in the CNMI during the past 20 years, it is understandable that there will be problems. Like new automobile drivers, it is inevitable that there will be wrong turns and it is inevitable that they will go down a blind alley and perhaps inevitable that they will have some fender-benders,

but we should engage them in a process which teaches them to have better driving habits and not simply take away their license.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. FILNER) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. FILNER, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. FURSE, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 46 minutes a.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Saturday, June 7, 1997, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XXIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3680. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Imazamox; Pesticide Tolerance [OPP-300502; FRL-5721-1] (RIN: 2070-AB78) received May 29, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3681. A letter from the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—RUS Standard for Acceptance Tests and Measurements of Telecommunications Plant [7 CFR Part 1755] received May 30, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3682. A letter from the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—Exemptions of RUS Operational Controls under Section 306E of the Rural Electrification Act; Timing of Notification to Borrowers [7 CFR Part 1710] received May 30, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3683. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, transmitting Final Priorities—Research in Education of Individuals with Disabilities Program; Program for Children with Severe Disabilities; Training Personnel for the Education of Individuals with Disabilities, pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 1232(f); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

3684. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulations, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's report on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(B); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

3685. A letter from the Acting General Counsel, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's final rule—Energy Conservation Program for Consumer Products: Test Procedures for Furnaces/Boilers,